

Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-07 L-03 FRB-03 OMB-01

TAR-01 SP-02 AGR-05 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 OIC-02 SIL-01 STR-04 TRSE-00 CIEP-01

CEA-01 INT-05 PRS-01 PA-01 USIA-06 /088 W

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R 201155Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 728

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

US MISSION GENEVA 1363

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, ESCAP, IN

SUBJECT: RED: ESCAP: FIRST AGREEMENT ON TRADE NEGOTIATIONS AMONG
ESCAP LDC'S

REF: A) STATE 191251 B) BANGKOK 16969

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED THE RECENT BANGKOK AGREEMENT WITH R.K. PURI,
DEPUTY SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, WHO DISCLOSED THE FOLLOW-
ING. OUTLINE OF THE AGREEMENT WAS DRAFTED AND PUSHED BY AN
UNCTAD EXPERT. TARIF CONCESSIONS COVERED 160 COMMODITIES AND IN-
VOLVED APPROXIMATELY 50 MILLION DOLLARS IN TRADE BETWEEN THE 8
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COUNTRIES WHICH PARTICIPATED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE VALUE OF

TARIFF CONCESSIONS, WHICH WAS AN ESCAP CALCULATION, WAS RELATIVELY SMALL IN COMPARISON WITH TOTAL REGIONAL TRADE BUT WAS AT LEAST A BEGINNING. BILATERAL CONCESSIONS ON PARTICULAR PRODUCTS WILL BE FULLY EXTENDED TO OTHER PARTICIPANTS IF THEY HAD MADE RECIPROCAL TARIFF CUTS. TARIFF CONCESSIONS WERE EXTENDED TO LAOS, THE ONE "LEAST DEVELOPED" COUNTRY AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS ON A NON-RECIPROCAL BASIS. MOST OF THE AGREEMENT COULD BE MODIFIED IN THE FUTURE BY A TWO THIRDS VOTE, EXCEPT FOR THE KEY PROVISIONS OF TRADE LIBERALIZATION AND EXPANSION, WHICH REQUIRED UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT TO CHANGE. THE 39 ARTICLE DOCUMENT PLUS THE NATIONAL LISTS WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE RELEASED BY ESCAP UNTIL THE AGREEMENT CAME INTO FORCE.

2. PURI SAID THAT HE EXPECTED PAKISTAN (THE EIGHTH MEMBER) TO SIGN SHORTLY. THE AGREEMENT NEEDED THREE RATIFICATIONS WITHIN SIX MONTHS BEFORE COMING INTO EFFECT, ALTHOUGH THIS TIME PERIOD COULD BE EXTENDED IF NECESSARY. HE HOPED, BUT WAS NOT CERTAIN, THAT THE AGREEMENT WOULD BE IN FORCE BY JANUARY 1, 1976. ONE POSSIBLE DELAYING FACTOR WAS THE FACT THAT GOVERNMENTS COULD NOT RATIFY THE AGREEMENT WITH RESERVATIONS. A STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE EIGHT ORIGINAL PARTICIPANTS (ASSUMING PAKISTAN SIGNED) WILL REVIEW ANY APPLICATIONS OF OTHER ESCAP COUNTRIES TO JOIN THE GROUP, ALTHOUGH PURI DID NOT EXPECT THIS TO HAPPEN IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE SAID THAT INDONESIA WAS NOT READY TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT AND THAT IRAN HAD RECENTLY MADE TARIFF REDUCTIONS ON ITS OWN. (WE ARE NOT SURE WHETHER PURI WAS REFERRING TO MFN OR REGIONAL TRADE TARIFF REDUCTIONS.).

3. PURI SAID THE NEXT MAJOR TASK OF THE EIGHT COUNTRIES WAS TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF NON-TARIFF BARRIERS. GUARANTEEING MARKET ACCESS TO LIMITED AMOUNTS OF IMPORTS FROM PARTICIPATING MEMBERS WOULD PROBABLY BE DISCUSSED. HE EXPECTED THAT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE WOULD PROBABLY TAKE PLACE IN BANGKOK IN JANUARY OR FEBRUARY 1976, HOPEFULLY IN CONNECTION WITH THE COMING INTO FORCE OF THE AGREEMENT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, TARIFF LAW, TRADE, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NEWDE11245
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750288-0166
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750835/aaaabeuk.tel
Line Count: 97
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 191251, 75 BANGKOK 16969
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUN 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <06 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RED: ESCAP: FIRST AGREEMENT ON TRADE NEGOTIATIONS AMONG ESCAP LDC'S
TAGS: ETRD, IN, ESCAP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006